

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/ARN:MDRAPER:SEB
APPROVED BY NEA:WCRAWFORD
NEA:NAVELIOTES
IO:GHELMAN
S/S-O:SVALERGA

-----065514 180224Z /21

O 180117Z JUL 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE
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AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 180797

EXDIS, LONDON FOR SAUNDERS AND ATHERTON

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, MOPS, LE, SY, IS, UNSC

SUBJECT: SOUTH LEBANON: MOVING LEBANESE ARMY UNITS SOUTH
REF: CRAWFORD/PARKER TELECON OF JULY 17

1. FOR AMB. PARKER: IN PREPARATION FOR YOUR MEETING JULY 18
WITH SARKIS, YOU ASKED FOR CURRENT DEPARTMENT GUIDANCE ON
WHETHER THE LEBANESE SHOULD SEND ARMY UNITS TO SOUTHERN
LEBANON AND WHAT THE ISRAELI ATTITUDE WOULD BE.

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2. OUR VIEW IS THAT SARKIS SHOULD SEND ARMY UNITS INTO
SOUTHERN LEBANON AS QUICKLY AS FEASIBLE BECAUSE:
-- IT IS IMPORTANT THAT LEBANESE UNITS BE THERE, THAT THE
LEBANESE FLAG IS FLYING IN PARTS OF THE AREA, AND THAT
SOME REASSERTION OF CIVIL AND SECURITY AUTHORITY BE MADE
WELL IN ADVANCE OF THE RENEWAL DATE FOR UNIFIL. THE UN

TROOP CONTRIBUTORS DO NOT WANT TO CARRY ON A TRUSTEESHIP FOR THE GOL INDEFINITELY. TO SECURE A POSITIVE VOTE OF RENEWAL, AT LEAST A TOKEN LEBANESE INVOLVEMENT IN SOUTHERN LEBANON IS IMPORTANT TO DEMONSTRATE THAT UNIFIL'S PURPOSE -- TO RESTORE LEBANESE AUTHORITY -- IS BEING PURSUED.

-- SARKIS HIMSELF ANNOUNCED ON JULY 15 THAT THE ARMY WOULD BE SENT SOUTH. THIS STEP WILL CONTRIBUTE TO THE APPEARANCE OF DECISIVENESS WHICH SARKIS NEEDS TO BURNISH.

-- THE SYRIANS WANT THE LEBANESE ARMY THERE FOR THEIR OWN REASONS, AND THEY HAVE PROMISED TO ASSIST IN GUARANTEEING THE SAFETY OF THE MOVEMENT SOUTH FROM PALESTINIAN CHALLENGES. THE PLO/FATAH MAINSTREAM REPORTEDLY IS READY TO ACQUIESCE. THESE FAVORABLE CONDITIONS MAY NOT LAST INDEFINITELY.

--WE PRESUME THAT THE MOVEMENT OF THE LEBANESE ARMY WILL SIMULTANEOUSLY RESOLVE THE HADDAD/SHIDIAC PROBLEM WITH SOME LEBANESE-STYLE RESOLUTION, WHEREBY THEY WILL BE RELIEVED OF COMMAND IN A NO-REWARD/NO-PUNISHMENT TYPE OF OPERATION. IT SEEMS TO US THAT AN EARLY RESOLUTION TO THE HADDAD/SHIDIAC PROBLEM COULD EASE IRRITATIONS FELT BY LEBANESE MUSLIMS, THE SYRIANS, THE PALESTINIANS, AND SOME PARTS OF THE ARAB WORLD, AND THAT THIS COULD HAVE SOME
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SPILL-OVER UTILITY, FOR EXAMPLE, IN THE EASING OF SOME PALESTINIAN DEMANDS UPON UNIFIL FOR STRONGER STEPS VIS-A-VIS THE CHRISTIAN ENCLAVES.

3. OUR VIEW OF THE ISRAELI POSITION IS THAT IT IS EQUIVOCAL, BUT THAT THE ISRAELIS COULD BE PERSUADED TO COOPERATE WITH THE INSERTION OF LEBANESE ARMY UNITS. THEY WILL WANT A FULL UNDERSTANDING OF THEIR MISSION AND PLANS, AND--AS A PRACTICAL MATTER--WE BELIEVE THE LEBANESE SHOULD PROVIDE THEM. DIRECT EXCHANGES WOULD BE BEST, BUT WE ARE PREPARED TO ASSIST IN SMOOTHING OUT DIFFERENCES OR MISUNDERSTANDINGS. WE EXPECT THAT THE ISRAELIS WILL WANT TO KNOW INTER ALIA THE WAY THE HADDAD PROBLEM WILL BE HANDLED, WHETHER THE LEBANESE ARMY WILL MOVE INTO THE MILITIA ENCLAVES, THE IDENTITIES OF THE PRINCIPAL COMMANDERS, AND THE COMPOSITION OF THE UNITS.

4. IF ASKED, YOU CAN SAY AT YOUR DISCRETION THAT WE PRESUME THE LEBANESE WILL NOT RPT NOT WANT TO DEAL EXPEDITIOUSLY AND DIRECTLY WITH SUCH PROBLEMS AS THE GOOD FENCE AND CONTINUED ISRAELI SUPPLY OPERATIONS VIS-A-VIS THE IRREGULAR MILITIAS. IF THIS IS INDEED THE

LEBANESE INTENTION, WE CONSIDER IT A WISE IDEA. SOME OF THESE PROBLEMS CAN BE DEALT WITH AT A LATER MOMENT, AFTER LEBANESE AUTHORITY HAS BEEN MORE SATISFACTORILY ESTABLISHED IN THE REGION.

5. WE SUSPECT THAT THE ISRAELIS MAY OBJECT TO THE INSERTION OF CERTAIN ARMY UNITS, INCLUDING THE UNIT FROM RAYAQ REPORTEDLY COMPOSED OF BOTH CHRISTIANS AND SHIA MUSLIMS. THE ISRAELIS MAY SUSPECT THAT THIS UNIT HAD BEEN SUBORNED

BY THE SYRIANS IN THE 1976 FIGHTING AND MAY STILL BE SUBJECT TO SYRIAN INFLUENCE. OUR VIEW IS THAT ON THIS QUESTION LEBANESE LEADERS MUST MAKE THEIR OWN DECISION AS TO THE SUITABILITY AND COMPOSITION OF THE UNITS
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INVOLVED, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT LOYALTY, ETC. IF THE ISRAELIS ARE UNREASONABLE ON THIS MATTER, WE WOULD UNDERTAKE TO PERSUADE THEM OTHERWISE.

6. WE WOULD LIKE YOU TO LEAVE THE GENERAL IMPRESSION THAT WE ARE PREPARED TO BE ACTIVE AND HELPFUL ON THEIR BEHALF, AND PROTECT LEBANESE SENSITIVITIES AND FACE WHEREVER POSSIBLE. BUT WE DO NOT WANT THE LEBANESE TO THINK THEY CAN COUNT ON US FULLY TO ARGUE WITH THE ISRAELIS ON EVERY LITTLE THING. THEY WILL HAVE TO FACE THE REALITIES AND TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE ISRAELI POSITION AS WELL AS THE NEED TO TAKE STEPS TO ENSURE UNIFIL RENEWAL. WE ALL HAVE TO RECOGNIZE THAT ISRAELI INFLUENCE WITH THE CHRISTIAN MILITIAS WILL BE ALL-IMPORTANT IN THE SUCCESS OF THIS OPERATION AND THAT UNIFIL TROOP CONTRIBUTORS WILL NOT OVER THE LONGER TERM WANT TO UNDERTAKE WHAT THE LEBANESE AVOID.

7. WE HOPE IN THIS DISCUSSION WITH SARKIS YOU CAN ASCERTAIN HIS DETAILED PLANS. FOR EXAMPLE, HOW FAR WOULD SYRIAN TROOPS ACCOMPANY LEBANESE ARMY UNITS ON MOVE SOUTH? TO THE FIRST UNIFIL CHECK-POINT? THROUGH HASBAYYA? IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO GET ISRAELI ACQUIESCENCE TO ANY SYRIAN MOVE OF THIS SORT.

8. BEIRUT 3998 JUST RECEIVED. THE THRUST OF WHAT YOU SAID TO BOUTROS AND WHAT WE PROPOSE YOU SAY TO SARKIS DIFFER ONLY IN THE SENSE THAT YOU SUGGESTED TO BOUTROS THAT IT MIGHT WELL BE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE TO GO BACK TO THE ISRAELIS AT THIS POINT ON THE ISSUE OF LEBANESE ARMY INSERTION INTO THE SOUTH. OUR ESTIMATE IS THAT WE WILL HAVE TO WEIGH IN WITH THE ISRAELIS TO GAIN THEIR COOPERATION ON THIS ISSUE, AS WE HAD IN THE PAST,
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AFTER THE LEBANESE HAVE DEVELOPED SPECIFIC PLANS AND AFTER OR SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH A GENUINE LEBANESE EFFORT TO REACH A PRACTICAL UNDERSTANDING WITH THE ISRAELIS THROUGH ILMAC OR OTHER DIRECT TALKS. THIS WON'T HAPPEN RIGHT AWAY.

9. WE AGREE WITH YOU THAT THE ISRAELIS PROBABLY WOULD NOT FACILITATE LEBANESE ARMY ENTRY INTO KEY ENCLAVES, AT LEAST AT FIRST, AND THAT THE LEBANESE, A LA UNIFIL, WOULD HAVE TO DO SOME NEGOTIATING ON THE GROUND WITH VARIOUS MILITIA COMMANDERS. WE DO BELIEVE, HOWEVER, AS MENTIONED ABOVE, THAT THE HADDAD/SHIDIAC PROBLEM SHOULD

BE DEALT WITH EXPEDITIOUSLY. WE ALSO AGREE WITH YOU THAT A TOKEN FORCE WOULD BE SATISFACTORY AND BETTER THAN NOTHING, BUT IT SHOULD BE NUMERICALLY STRONG ENOUGH TO DEAL WITH A CHALLENGE FROM PALESTINIAN INFILTRATORS IN UNIFIL'S AREA OF OPERATION.

10. TEL AVIV: ANY ADDED THOUGHTS YOU MAY WISH TO PROVIDE AMBASSADOR PARKER MUST REACH HIM PRIOR TO 1130 JULY 18. CHRISTOPHER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REPORTS, TROOP DEPLOYMENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 jul 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE180797
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: MDRAPER:SEB
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780293-1322
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780747/aaaabnmi.tel
Line Count: 197
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 83235171-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1968551
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SOUTH LEBANON: MOVING LEBANESE ARMY UNITS SOUTH
TAGS: PGOV, MOPS, LE, SY, IS, UNSC
To: BEIRUT
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/83235171-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014